

Inspection of Southam St James C of E Academy

Tollgate Road, Southam, Warwickshire CV47 1EE

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Southam St James C of E Primary Academy. They feel that they can 'let their light shine'. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Bullying does not happen very often. When it does, staff deal with it quickly.

The curriculum prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils know how to be tolerant, active and eat healthily. One pupil said, '[Mental health is] like teeth: if you don't brush them they decay; if you don't look after your mind, it will be bad.' Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. Leaders make sure that pupils have good pastoral support and children know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils also enjoy attending a range of after-school clubs, including sports and model building.

Pupils study a broad range of subjects and show interest in what they are learning. However, leaders have not ensured that teachers' subject knowledge is secure. This slows pupils' learning and limits pupils from reaching their full potential.

Leaders and most staff have high expectations for pupils' academic achievement and behaviour. At times, however, some pupils do not behave as well as they could.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have thought about the progression of pupils' knowledge and skills over time and have sequenced this well. However, this is more developed in some subjects than in others. Teachers' understanding of how to teach some subjects is not always clear. For example, in mathematics, teachers do not always use the correct mathematical vocabulary to support pupils' learning. Teachers use assessment information to find out what pupils know and to plan the next steps in learning.

In English and mathematics, leaders check regularly how well pupils are learning. In other subjects, this process is just starting. Subject leaders have not been able to check if their subject curriculums are effective. They do not know if teachers are delivering the curriculum as intended. This means that leaders do not know how well pupils are achieving in these subjects.

Leaders and staff have raised the profile of reading across the school. They are actively involved in a national project to do this. Leaders have put in place a new phonics curriculum. Some staff have received training in this. The phonics curriculum is delivered well in the early years. In key stage one, adults identify those pupils who struggle to read sounds fluently and accurately. However, support is not put in place quickly for them to learn these sounds and catch up. Reading books in the early years and key stage one are well matched to pupils' phonics knowledge. This is not always the case in key stage 2. Pupils do not develop their reading confidence or fluency as well as they could.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Parents agree, with one parent commenting that their child 'is often disappointed on Saturday when there is no school'. Children love to learn and play. The early years curriculum is well sequenced and children build on what they already know and can do. Reading is prioritised and children have many opportunities to read and be read to.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support with their learning. Where appropriate, pupils get extra help. For example, pupils with SEND receive extra adult support or practical equipment to help them to learn. Pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs get specific attention to help them access the curriculum.

Pupils want to do well in school. They generally behave well in lessons, but some pupils with SEND struggle to do so. These pupils' behaviour is also not consistently good at playtimes. Leaders are aware of this and have recently introduced new strategies to support these pupils. However, these strategies are not well understood by all staff and are not consistently applied.

Pupils' wider development is well catered for. They enjoy having important responsibilities in school, such as being lunchtime helpers and being part of the 'worship team'. Pupils understand why they need to show respect to others. Leaders plan trips, visitors and experiences that enrich pupils' day-to-day lives. They also encourage them to understand diversity, for example when visiting other places of worship. Leaders provide good pastoral support, and children know how to keep themselves safe and healthy.

Governors know the school well. They want pupils to succeed. They provide challenge and support but acknowledge that there is more work to do. The multi-academy trust is putting support in place to help leaders. This includes managing some recent changes to staffing. Most staff enjoy working at the school. However, some are worried about their workload. Leaders are aware of this.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a top priority at this school. Leaders ensure that all staff receive training and regular updates. As a result, staff know how to spot when a pupil might be at risk of harm. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a pupil's welfare. Leaders work well with external agencies when required. Pupils say they feel safe because they have been taught how to stay safe. This includes staying safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff have not received sufficient training in order to deliver the phonics curriculum. This means that some pupils do not develop their reading fluency or confidence as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are well trained in the implementation of phonics, especially for those pupils who need to catch up.
- Some subject leaders have not had the opportunity to oversee the curriculum developments in their subject. These subject leaders do not know how well pupils are achieving or where there are gaps in teachers' subject knowledge. Leaders should ensure that subject leaders are supported to fulfil their roles so they can monitor the quality of education in their subject.
- Strategies to support the behaviour of some pupils with SEND are not applied consistently and are not fully understood by some staff. This means that some pupils with SEND do not behave as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are aware of the strategies to manage pupils' behaviour and that staff apply such strategies consistently.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 146151 |
| Local authority | Warwickshire |
| Inspection number | 10256818 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy converter |
| Age range of pupils | 4 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 190 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of trust | Mrs Paula Whitfield |
| Headteacher | Alison Hine |
| Website | www.southamstjames.covmat.org |
| Date of previous inspection | Not previously inspected |

Information about this school

- Southam St James C of E Academy converted to become an academy in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Southam St James (VA) C of E Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be requires improvement.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is within the Diocese of Coventry. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in June 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The school's next section 48 inspection will not take place for at least 24 months.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher. He also met two members of the governing body, including the chairs of governors. He met with three members of the multi-academy trust, including the chair of the trust.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the diocese.
- The inspectors viewed a range of safeguarding documentation. They examined checks on safer recruitment and spoke with members of staff to check their safeguarding knowledge.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, computing and history. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and viewed examples of pupils' work.
- An inspector observed children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 read to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors spoke with members of staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- The inspectors considered the responses, including the free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View. They also considered the responses to the staff and pupil surveys. An inspector also spoke to parents and carers at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school's self-evaluation, school improvement priorities, school policies, curriculum documents, SEND records, behaviour records, attendance records and minutes of meetings held by the governing body.

Inspection team

Barry Yardsley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tracey O'Keeffe-Pullan

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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